

A Community Benefit Society – a solution for real change?



20 th C Welfare	21 st C Radical Help	Community Benefit Society (aka CBS) Our response to the comparisons in Hilary Cottam's best seller Radical Help , between the old ways of doing things and the change needed.
FIX THE PROBLEM	GROW THE GOOD LIFE	A CBS encourages people to follow their passions and focus on a meaningful project in their community. Our CBS project shares tools and resources to help people make better decisions, take responsibility and control. Everyone is invited and enabled to have a good life in a CBS.
MANAGE NEED	DEVELOP CAPABILITY	A CBS meets people, as citizens, where they are, walking alongside, sharing simple and useful tools for people to make the difference they want to make. Everyone is invited to take part and contribute on what they are interested in doing and what needs doing, including learning new skills. Everyone has something to offer and can contribute to the wider aims of the CBS.
TRANSACTIONAL CULTURE	ABOVE ALL - RELATIONSHIPS	CBS, like any successful community enterprise is harder to establish as it's founded on relationships - yet much more resilient. It is democratic and explicitly looks to involve and engage the wider community, through both a vote and expectation of participation. Anyone can be a leader of a project within the CBS and is supported to get there. The strength of the connections which in turn (at the speed of trust) develop into long lasting and meaningful relationships are the fundamental building blocks of a successful CBS.
AUDIT MONEY	CONNECT MULTIPLE FORMS OF RESOURCE	CBS are founded on cooperative principles of enterprise and mutuality in a particular place. Physical and other resources (eg finance /buildings) often are not in the control of communities. Funding is drip fed through 'topdown' services and communities are forced to beg and compete. Even buildings owned by the community (in the care of the council) are often inaccessible due to a misguided set of rules. The express purpose of our CBS project is to take over assets, create and make enterprising use from them, pooling and sharing resources with everyone.
CONTAIN RISK	CREATE POSSIBILITY	A CBS; in the conversation around what it can achieve; creates possibility. It's not part of our day to day common sense – many people are not used to running things themselves. What is possible and the boundaries of our imaginations have too often been left to private entrepreneurs, to 'professionals'; or to expect the 'council' to do it for us. The risk of doing nothing is under explored. There are many things the community can do for ourselves; it just needs untapping and supporting to flourish. ' Possibility TH!NKing ' is a skill, and needs to be shared and nurtured and so is embedded in our approach in our project.
CLOSED & TARGETED	OPEN: TAKE CARE OF EVERYONE	A CBS exists for the benefit of the whole community, members or not, open and inclusive to all. One of the core co-operative principles is care for the community. The CBS gives a structure for this to happen, between being a good neighbour and handing over to professionals. There is a role for many types of organisation however we should look to work out from the strengths & needs within the community. The surplus generated by our CBS will go directly in to a 'community wealth' fund to be allocated & shared locally.